# AN Invitation of LOVE

## To ALL PEOPLE:

But especially to the Inhabitants of the Parish of *Stepny*, and those of the Hamlets of *Mile-End* and *Ratliff*, amongst whom I have lived for the space of 25 years; which is in true Love to your Immortal Souls, from your Neighbour and Friend in the good will of God, *John Sellwood*. 1678.

Being the earnest Desire of my Soul to God for you, that you may be brought off from those dark traditional Wayes of Worship, wherein your Souls lie in bondage to sin and iniquity, that so your spiritual Eye may be opened, to see and discern betwixt things that differ, and may no longer be beguiled through the crafty Wiles of the Enemy, that lies in wait to deceive, nor that you may not spend your Money and Time for that which will not profit (but tend to the hurt and ruin of) your immortal Souls; this being part of that Experience, that I have certainly been taught, and that I have learned of God, who by his inward, dreadful, terrible, searching Power, made manifest to my very Heart the Deceitfulness and Hypocrisie of these Men-made Ministers, which run and the Lord never sent them, and so preach the Imagination of their own Brain, whereby they do not profit the People at all, but by their Lyes and their Lightness are Instruments in the Enemies Hand to beguile the Souls of thousands; therefore I do heartily intreat you my Neighbours and Acquaintance, and all that are deceived by them, to come out from amongst them, and partake no longer with them in their Sins, lest the Lord arise in his Fury and fierce Indignation, and pour out of his Plagues and Judgments upon you suddenly without Remedy, and there be no way of escaping.

A Neighbours

NEighbours and Acquaintance, in the weighty Conſideration of your preſent dangerous eſtate am I conſtrained thus to appear to your publick view, that thereby I might clear my Conſcience as in the ſight of God: Having been in times paſt led away with the Error of the Wicked, but through the overcomings of the Love of God, am in meaſure returned, to the Shepherd and Biſhop of the Soul, who takes care for his Sheep, and forſakes them not in the cloudy and dark Day: whenas thoſe falſe Shepherds who ſeek the Fleece, but the Sheep they regard not; they Feed themſelves with the Fat, and Cloath themſelves with the Wooll, but the loſt and the wandring Sheep they ſeek not after, but by force and by Cruelty they rule over them; And thoſe whom the Lord hath ſought out and found them in deſolate places, and have delivered them from the Jaws of thoſe Devourers (who dare not give them Gifts or Rewards for deceiving the Souls of the ſimple) even theſe are thoſe that they prepare War againſt, by which means the Lame and the Blind are turned out of the way. My old Neighbours and Acquaintance, it is not unknown to ſome of you, how in times paſt I was where you now are: I mean a diligent Hearer of thoſe who aſſume to themſelves to be Miniſters of Chriſt (but indeed are not, as their own works do ſufficiently make them manifeſt) And I can in Truth ſpeak it at this day as before the Lord, that at that time my very Heart and Soul did eagerly hunger and thirſt after a Soul-ſatisfying enjoyment of God: And the pure holy God, that knows the ſecrets of all Hearts, knows, that in that day the earneſt deſire of my Soul was, That I might be made a ſenſible witneſs of the Love of God, that I might be ſure of Reſt and Peace with the Lord, when time in this World as to me ſhould be no more; and at that very day did the Lord raiſe a Cry in my Soul, which could not be ſatisfied with the moſt diligent attention upon thoſe things which Men call Ordinances: and though according to the underſtanding that I then had, I was diligently found in the performance of thoſe things, yet I found no true ſatisfaction to my Soul in theſe things, but my Soul lay ſtill as in *Ægypts* Bondage, and in that day the Lord looked down and beheld my affliction, and

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gave me some hopes of Deliverance, but then when a desire was begot in my heart that I might see the day of Deliverance, in that day how did the Enemy of my Soul encrease my burden, but still my Groanings and my Cryes went forth to the Lord, and that in the secret of my heart, *Oh that the Lord would arise and rescue my Soul that lay as amongst Lyons.*

Oh, Neighbours and Acquaintance, as before the God of all my Mercies do I this testifie, that at that day if I had had the Riches and Glory of the whole World, I could freely have parted with all, to have had assurance of Peace with God to my never-dying Soul: but oh, the time of Deliverance was not yet come, but still the rage of the Enemy encreased, and inward perplexity did more abound, oh then were the Sins brought up in my view, that had been a long time committed, and been as forgotten, then were these things brought again into remembrance, by which my inward Wound was increased; Oh how did my Soul at that day lie in doubt, and a fear often entred my mind, that I should never find a resting place to my Soul; oh the disquietings of mind that I then lay under, then were my Sins set in order before me, which for number (might be called Legions for they) were many, then could I find no place where the worker of Iniquity could hide himself; and though I ran from one Minister (so called) to another, yet they were all Physicians of no value, for their Medicines were corrupted, which would but more and more Infect and Putrifie a wounded Soul; for the Lord had at that time opened my Eye to see sin to be exceeding sinful, and I in the sencible feeling of the weight and burthen thereof was weary of the load of Iniquity, as a burthen too heavy to bear: And when I sate amongst you, desiring in the fervency of my Spirit that I might find some inward ease and Soul refreshment: how oft was my very Life burthened to see the cold Lazy performences of both Priest and People in those things which they ignorantly call a Worshipping of God; and at that very time was I constrained to write some Lines unto *William Clark*, called *Dean of Winchester* and *Doctor of Stepny*, which lay as a great Burden upon my Mind, whereby I saw a great difference betwixt his Preaching and his Practice, which may be also easily

discerned in this day, if his Hearers were but willing to be undeceived, and not to give away their Reason and Understanding, to believe all things that men of unchristian Lives (who mind the Friendship of the World more then the Glory of God, or the Good and Eternal Welfare of poor Souls, whom they pretend to be Pastors over, shall preach for filthy Lucre sake, who no more regard the Glory of God, nor the Eternal Welfare of poor Souls, then those dissembling *Jews*, who cryed out, *The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord,* and they themselves live in all manner of unrighteousness; so those pretended Ministers, who propheſie smooth things to the People, and tell them, that they must perform this Duty and the other Duty, and this Ordinance and the other Ordinance, and many things they enjoyn the poor dark People (whose understandings are clouded as to the things of God) to perform, and in the height of their Zeal, and the best and strictest of their Performances, the best of it is full of sin and uncleanness, and yet these are those Services that they will be offering to God, and so suppose they have done those things that God will accept of.

Well Neighbours, consider; for it may as truly be testified in our dayes as the Prophet of the Lord testified in former Ages, *That from the Priests Prophaneness is gone forth into all the Land*; and as one that have had my share amongst them, in hearing their Doctrines of Deceit; and receiving them also for a season, I do testifie, and that from a living Experience, That as long as Priests and People continue in the performing of those things, their Services are poluted and defiled, and the Lord takes no Pleasure in them, but they are as a Stink in the Nostrils of God, and they are Abomination in his Sight: Therefore in the true Love of God, and in Good Will to all your Souls, I do earnestly desire you, that you would forsake these filthy Dreamers, that dream they are serving of God, and doing those things that God requires, when the true and faithful Witness in their own Bosoms do testifie, that they are all defiled, and filthy, and unclean in the best of their Performances, and do well know, that the Lord requires no unclean thing at their hands, but that it is as the Offering of Swines Blood, or as if they slew a Man; Consider

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how great Abominations these are in the Sight of the Lord, even such are your poluted unclean Services, whilst Sin and Iniquity is found therein.

Well Neighbours, I do desire that you would be serious in the weighty Consideration of your precious and immortal Souls; for the Redemption of the Soul is precious; and if once lost, all the Cost, and Pains, and Tears of Men and Angels cannot give to God a sufficient Ransom for one Soul. Therefore be perswaded for your own Eternal Good, whilst it is called to day, for to do the Work of the Day; for when the Night cometh, no man can work: Oh! how sad it is to see, and sensibly to behold many that have passed away the greatest part of their day, and have not yet entred into Christ's Vineyard? but it may be greatly feared, that the last Hour of the Day is approacht upon many, and the day is near ended, and the Work of the Day not yet begun. Oh! how few is there amongst the whole lump of *England*'s Professors, that have bowed their Heart, and set to their Shoulder to begin to work out their own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, but of those few that the Lord has drawn by the Cords of his Love, and pluckt them as Brands out of the burning (whilst thousands remain in their scorching Lusts of Sin & Uncleanness) & this small Remnant is walking in the Light, where the Stumbling-blocks are removed, and the Occasion of Stumbling taken out of the way; for the Redeemer of *Israel* is come, that turneth away Ungodliness from *Jacob*: How is this little Remnant despised amongst those that have Eyes and see not, and Ears and hear not, and Hearts that do not understand the things of God! for their spiritual Senses are darkned and benumbed, that they will not believe the Work that God is about to do in the Earth, which is to finish Sin, and put an end to Transgression, and to bring in Everlasting Righteousness: this Work is the Lord a doing in the Hearts of thousands; and a living Faith hath the Lord raised in the Minds of many, that all the Powers of Hell and the Grave shall never disannul nor extinguish. Therefore in love I desire that you that are not yet come into the Vineyard, that you loyter no longer, but be willing for the time that yet remains to enter into the Work of the Lord, whose bountiful Hand will reward you largely,

largely, according as your Work and Labour of Love ſhall be. Oh! ſtand no longer idle, thou that it may be haſt lived fifty or threeſcore years fulfilling the Luſts of the Fleſh, how canſt thou reaſonably expect a twelfth part of thy Life to be unexpired? Oh! how many thouſands have been cut off in their Sin and Rebellion againſt God, that have not lived thoſe years thou haſt attained unto? Oh! abuſe not the Long-ſuffering and Patience of the Lord any longer, but let his Goodneſs and Forbearance lead thee to Repentance never to be repented of. Oh! yet a very little while and thy Comforts and Contents, of what ſort ſoever they may now be to thee in this World, they ſhall be no more. Oh! becauſe there is Wrath (revealed from Heaven againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of men) beware leſt he take thee away with his Stroke; then a great Ranſom ſhall not deliver thee: Will he eſteem thy Riches? No, nor all the forces of Strength; if thou hadſt all the Treaſures of the Earth, or the Strength of all the War-like Princes in the World, thou couldſt neither bribe the Almighty nor reſiſt his Power. Oh! be not deceived, God will not be mocked; that which every man ſows, that ſhall he reap; he that ſows to the Fleſh, of the Fleſh he ſhall reap Corruption; but he that ſows to the Spirit, of the Spirit ſhall reap Life Everlaſting. Oh! that all you my poor Neighbours and Acquaintance might be all brought truly thus to ſow in the Spirit, that ſo your Fruits may be unto Holineſs, the End whereof will be Everlaſting Life; this Eternal Happineſs do I heartily wiſh both for my Friends and Enemies, if it may ſtand with the good Pleaſure of the Lord, That when thoſe fading tranſitory Pleaſures of this Life ſhall have an End, we may ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of God, where Reſt and Peace to the immortal Soul ſhall be enjoyed when time in this World ſhall be no more.

Neighbours and Acquaintance, to whom I wiſh well unto in Soul and Body; by what is already written you may diſcern ſomething of the ſtriving of the Lord with me in the time of my Ignorance. And in the Year 1665. when his Fierce Judgment of the Plague entred our Habitations, at which time I was a diligent

ligent hearer of *William Clark*, called Dean of *Winchester*, and finding a great difference between his Preaching and his Practice, I was moved in Bowells of Love to his Immortal Soul to write some Lines unto him, and I left it at his Gate with Directions for himself, wherein I did earnestly desire, that I might see him act and walk as did become a Minister of Christ, and after this I remained about three years a hearer of him; and at that time when I wrote unto him, I had never been at one of the Meetings of the Faithful Followers of God (whom the Wicked World despise, and in scorn call *Quakers*.) And yet at that very time was the Lord by his good Spirit at work in my heart, and in his Bowells of Love waited upon me to be gracious, and to find me in that condition wherein I might be a fit Object of his Mercy, and as I did in my low Estate in the sincerity of my heart, seek unto the Lord for help and deliverance, that I might be made a sensible Witness of the Love of God to my Soul, the Lord did appear in the needful time, and gave me clearly to see, that those whom I had followed (who preach for filthy Lucre) were not the true Ministers of Christ; and so by his mighty Power opened my Understanding and turned my mind inward, whereby I did see by his heavenly Light the very motions and beginnings of Sin that did appear in my Heart, and as I kept my Eye single to that which discovered sin in its first appearance, I say, Ability was given me and that from God to avoid those Evils the Enemy of my Soul did tempt unto, and so through the workings of the Spirit of God in my own heart I had a Discovery of that Power that was able to overcome Sin, and by that Power was I separated from the teachings of those which before I had diligently followed, and by the good Hand of God I was brought amongst those poor despised People (whom the World in derision call *Quakers*) whose Principles and Practice (that walk Faithfully to what they Profess) do as really answer to that Life of Purity that my Soul did desire, as Face answereth Face in a Glass. So desiring with my very Soul, that you my Neighbours and Acquaintance may be brought to Witness true inward Peace which far excels all outward plenty in this World, that so when your dayes here shall be Accomplished you may lay down your

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heads in Peace with the Lord, and rest from all your Labours, and your good works that are done and acted in the Light of Christ they shall follow you; this is my hearty desire for you my old Neighbours and Acquaintance (and for *William Clark* also) as for my own Soul, to whom I did in true Love write a Letter when I was a hearer of him; but being of a cowardly Spirit was ashamed to deliver it my self, but left it at his Gate with Directions for himself.

*Here follows a Copy of the Letter that I writ in the Year* 1665. *and left at* William Clark's *Door (called Dean of* Winchester) *with Directions for himself.*

"DOctor, as thou art in thy place, I reverence thee, and as
"far as thou art Obedient to the Truth of the Gospel, I
"do and shall highly honour thee, but if thou derogate from
"the work thou hast undertaken, I think it not my duty to own
"thee as my Teacher; as for the Doctrine thou hast sometimes
"delivered, I have heard it with delight, and have thought that it
"proceeded from a good and an honest heart; but thy Life do
"so far contradict thy Doctrine, that makes me to think thou
"aimest at the praise of men, more then at the Glory of God, or
"the Conversion of poor Souls: And my reason is this, because
"I understand thou art backward in the doing of thy own duty,
"and dost not preach constantly as thou oughtest, neither art thou
"willing to pay him his Wages that doth thy Work: Oh, for-
"did Stupidity! what, hath the God of this World so blinded
"thine Eyes that thou seest no happiness that is like to that which
"thou here enjoyest? Or art thou affraid thou shalt do too much
"for God? Or that thy Parishioners Souls is in so good a State
"that they need not Instruction? I fear it is like Priest like People,
"every one seeking his own, and (few or) none the things of
"God, as if this present Life was the best that is or ever shall
"be, that there is more Pains bestowed in seeking after the
"Bread that perisheth, then after that which endureth to Ever-
"lasting Life. Methinks had I the Knowledge and the Gift that
"God hath given to thee, I should better improve it, and be

"more

"more ready to preach in season and out of season, to lay Line "upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, here a little, and there a "little; for I am sure the Inhabitants of this Place stands in as much "need of Instruction upon Instruction as any poor Creatures that "are on this side Destruction; for it makes my Heart to trem- "ble to hear and to see the horrid Abominations that are com- "mitted by those that frequent the publick Meeting, and do "pretend to partake of the Lord's Supper; but I greatly fear "that they shall never taste of the Sweetness of that Supper: "Wherefore seeing their Necessity and Danger is so great, be- "stir thy self with speed, cast away thy Sloath, and labour with "all thy might; for it is an honourable Imployment if well per- "formed: Let those Souls that are (or ought to be) under thy "Care, let them see that thou art ready and willing to the ut- "most of thy Power, to pull them out of the Snare of the De- "vil, that takes them captive at his own Will. Oh! let the "Compassion of a Friend be extended to them, and wise Re- "proofs and Admonition be closely laid unto them, that if it may "be possible to awaken them out of their deep (if not dead) "sleep, that they have so long time so securely rested in: God "may be pleased to assist thy Endeavours with the powerful "working of his holy Spirit, to turn them from Darkness to "Light, and from Satans power to the Power of God. And I "shall heartily joyn in Prayer with thee to Almighty God, that "he may make thee succesful to turn many to Righteousness, and "that thou may'st shine as a Sun in the Firmament of God. Oh! "the Redemption of the Soul is precious, and if once lost, all "the Pains, and Cost, and Tears of Men and Angels cannot "give to God a Ransom sufficient for one poor Soul: Oh! let "the Consideration of their Danger provoke thee to a serious "Compassion of their deplorable Condition; and let thy Endea- "vours witness to the World and before God, that thy Heart's "desire is, that the Souls of thy poor People may be saved: Let "thy own filthy Lucre and Laziness be laid aside; strive not for "so many Titles of Honour, and Places of Preferment, it doth "but increase thy Account, and if not well performed, it will "but heighten thy Damnation, and prove Bitterness to thee in

"the Latter End. Are not the Souls of this one Parish more "then ever thou wilt take an account of (as thou oughtest) whilst "thou livest? Is there no other Duty incumbent upon thee but "to preach a Sermon once in a Weak, nay, sometimes not a "Moneth or a Quarter? and is that as much as can be required "from thee? Oh! take heed; art thou a Guide to the Blind, or "an instructer of the Simple? Thou that teachest another, teach- "est not thou thy self? Thou that preachest against Titles of "Honour and Worldly-mindedness, dost thou strive for Ho- "nours and Preferments? and scrape up the Trash of the Earth, "as if with it thou couldst purchase the Treasures of Heaven. "Away, away with this filthy Covetousness, which is the Root "of all Evil: Dost thou not know, that the Treasures of Wick- "edness profit not in the Day of Wrath? Art not thou sensible "that if thou neglectest thy Masters Work, and begin to eat and "drink with the Drunken, thy Master will come at unawares, "and then what wouldst thou give (were it in thy power) to "be found in the posture of a faithful, laborious, watchful Ser- "vant? Well I know, I need not write these Lines unto thee, "to mind thee with that thou knowest not (for these things I "know thou hast often minded others of) but by reason thou art "so remiss in the Performance of what thou knowest, and in do- "ing what thou oughtest, I thought it partly my Duty to mind "thee of thy Unmindfulness, and whether thou wilt hear or for- "bear, I know not; but let me entreat thee not to be offended "because of me; for the Lord knows my Heart I wish thee no "ill, neither do I think thee any; but glad I should be to see the "Gospel of Christ to flourish, and that such as thou art would "not think much of their Labour in the Ministry, but to be fer- "vent in Praying and Preaching, and that it may be done fre- "quently, that I with my poor Neighbours and Fellow-Crea- "tures may receive the blessed Refreshment and Consolations, "that God usually vouchsafeth to those that attend upon his Or- "dinances in sincerity of Heart and Spirit. And as thy Care "ought to be privately as well as publickly, my heart's desire is, "that thou wouldst provide some Helps for thy poor Fellow- "Creatures, and teach them to know their Duties, and seriously

" to warn them of their Evil Wayes, which they are so much
" habituated in, that they sin grosly, and mind it not; as Swear-
" ing, and Drunkennes, and Lying and Foolish Jesting, which
" is not seemly; these to my Knowledge are the daily Sins of
" those amongst whom I live, and these they live in, and think
" they live well; and their Confidence is so strong that they
" shall be justified by their Faith in Christ (though I greatly fear
" it is but a dead Faith) and that to them there shall be no Con-
" demnation, but this their Confidence (I fear) will fail them,
" and their Expectation perish: Therefore doth it not behove
" thee, in thy place, to do thy utmost to undeceive them, lest
" they dye in their Sins, and their Blood be required at thy hands?
" wherefore defer the time no longer, lest it be too late; for there
" are many that have Gray Hairs on their Heads, that have not
" (I fear) the least Grain of True Grace in their Hearts: There-
" fore up and be doing speedily, lest that Death put a Period to
" their Hopes, or to thy Endeavours; do not think it below thee
" to go into the poor dark Cottages of those under thy Charge,
" their Souls are as precious as the Souls of Princes; and it more
" concerns thee to look after those over whom God hath set thee,
" then seemingly to look after the Great Ones of the Earth? what
" needest thou to value the Revenues of Dukes or Deaneries?
" is not here work enough for thee, and Wages enough too,
" unless thy Heart be infected, and thy Mind more delighted in
" Gold then in Goodness: What needest thou care for the
" Friendship of the World, Dost thou not know it is Enmity
" with God? Why then shouldst thou prize these fading Plea-
" sures, and disregard Eternal and Unconceivable Joy? The
" time is at hand when thou and I must appear before the Judg-
" ment-Seat of Christ, and there give account of all our Deeds
" done in the Body, of what kind soever they be; thou shalt
" shalt not then find more friendship for that thou wast Rich in
" Wealth, unless thou wast Rich in Good Works; neither shall
" I be the less esteemed for that I was Poor upon Earth, but the
" more, according as my Treasure was in Heaven. What need
" shou as I care, though the Wise Men in the World count us
" Fools,

"Fools, when at the last the God of Wisdom will say, *We were*
"*not Fools, but truly Wise?* then whatsoever thy Hand findeth
"to do that is appointed thee by God, do it with all thy
"might; for there is neither Wisdom nor Knowledge in the
"Grave, whither thou goest: do not delay because it is dange-
"rous, nor be indifferent or Luke-warm; for that will prove
"unacceptable unto God, and unprofitable unto men: shew forth
"the Power of Godliness in thy own Life and Conversation,
"that thou mayst prove a Pattern that deserves Imitation: let
"the World see that thou hast and dost endeavour to be crucified
"to the World, and the World to thee, that so thy Worldli-
"mindedness may not prove a Snare to thy poor People: For
"who would think that to be true that thou teachest others (when
"thou sayst) and dost not thy self. I will not trouble thee with
"much more at present (nay, I wish that this may not be a trou-
"ble to thee) but that thou mayst faithfully practise thy Duty,
"or else these Lines (though like *Jehojakim* thou burn them) they
"shall rise up in Judgment against thee; and I my self must ap-
"pear as a Witness, that thou wast Unfaithful in thy Office, and
"didst not regard the humble Entreaties (I hope) of a poor
"Child of God: But I trust in the Almighty, that he will ex-
"ercise his Power upon thy Heart, and constrain thee to be ser-
"viceable to him (and profitable to the Souls of those under thy
"Charge) in thy Generation. So leaving thee to the Gui-
"dance of the blessed Spirit of Truth, who alone is able to lead
"thee in the Way of Truth, and to make thy Labour successful.
"So hoping thou wilt not censure me as either Envious or Ambi-
"tious; for the Lord that knows the Secrets of all Hearts, knows,
"that I wish no Ill, but Good to all the Inhabitants of the world:
"and since it hath pleased God by his good Spirit to convince me
"of Sin, and hath pluckt me as a Brand out of the Fire, the
"Spirit within me constraineth me to speak; for my Belley is as
"Wine that hath no Vent; and if I should any longer keep silent,
"my own Conscience would condemn me, *that I was ashamed of*
"*Christ and his Truth in this Adulterous and Perverse Generation*:
"Wherefore being heartily willing to be obedient to the Truth,
"I am both ready and willing to make a good Improvement of



"what

" what God hath bestowed upon me for his Promise sake, that " hath promised, *To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have* " *more abundantly*; and I trust in the Strength of the Almighty " I shall (when called to it) speak before Kings, and not be a- " shamed. So I shall at present conceal my Name, though I have " in part revealed my Mind, and shall heartily commit my self " and my Ways unto the Lord, that he may direct my Paths; *For* " *the Way of Man is before the Lord, and he pondereth all his Go-* " *ings.* So I rest, thine in the Lord.

These Lines did I write to *William Clark*, and left them at his Gate, which I suppose he received; and at that time did my heart earnestly desire that I might see him act and walk as did become a faithful Minister of Christ; and after this I remained a Hearer of him for about three years; for I was a long time beguiled through his smooth words and fair Speeches, so that I did stay amongst them till such time the Lord did clearly evidence to my Understanding, that he and all others that preach for filthy Lucre, were not Ministers of Christ; but were of the number of those that ran, and the Lord never sent them, and so cannot profit the People at all; for they are gone from the Guidance of the Spirit of Truth, which God promised to put into the Hearts and Inward Parts of his People, whereby they should all know the Lord from the least to the greatest. And this is that holy Way that the Prophet of the Lord saw in Ages that are past, that was to be exalted above all wayes that are from below; and in that Way of Holiness the Wayfaring Man though a Fool shall not err; into which holy Way the Desire of my heart to God is, that you my old Neighbours and Acquaintance may be brought, that you may find Peace and Rest to your never-dying Souls.

Neighbours, by this Letter that I have given you an Account of, you may in Equity judge, that what was written was in true Love to his Soul, and to ease my Conscience of that Burden that lay upon it, I being at that time made sensible of the great disproportion that was betwixt his Preaching and his Practice: And I at that time was of a Cowardly Spirit, and was afraid to deliver that to him which I was constrained through the Love of God

to write to him, but left it at his Door (and though I had some Ground to judge that he had it) yet being not certain of the same, the Lord was pleased still to bring trouble on my Mind for being ashamed to appear boldly as a Witness (for God) against *William Clark*'s Hypocrisie, which Trouble I could not be eased of till such time I did manifest my self to him, that he might understand, that I was the man that had signified my Love to him after such a manner, and therefore was I constrained the second time to write unto him, and delivered it my self into his own Hand, which words are as followeth.

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*William Clark*,

"IN Bowels of Love I have written these Lines unto thee, "having often had it upon me from the Lord, to bear my Te- "stimony against thee for thy Form of Godliness, which is with- "out the Power, or for Words professing Christ when in Works "thou deny'st him, being reprobated (or turned aside) from "the holy Spirit of Truth (which is the Guide of the Faithful, "and) which would lead thee into all Truth if followed and "faithfully obeyed; therefore as one that hath had good Expe- "rience both of thy Life and Doctrine, I am bold in the Lord "to charge upon thee those Good Words which thou hast used "in Hypocrisie, wherein it is plainly manifest, that thou holdst "the Truth in Unrighteousness; for otherwise, thou durst not "deny that good and wholsome Form of Words, in the Life and "Power of it, as thou sometimes hast used by way of Preach- "ing or Teaching others; therefore having divers times some "Weight upon my Spirit, to remind thee of what thou hast "sometimes minded others, and that amongst many others "is, that precious place of Scripture in which a good man once "said, *My Righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my* "*Heart shall not Reproach me as long as I live*: A blessed Estate "indeed, and happy are all those that are in a feeling sense there- "of. Now, whether thou art the Man whose Conscience is "thus void of Offence towards God and towards Man, try and

"see,

"ſee; for as a Witneſs before the Lord ſhall I appear, either "to thy Juſtification or to thy Condemnation; for thoſe words "thou utteredſt, and after a long Diſcourſe upon them, thou "didſt affirm, *That thou hadſt rather chuſe* Paul *and* Silas *'s condi-"tion in the Stocks (or in Priſon) then to have the moſt plentiful "condition here with the Stripes (or Reproaches) of thine own Con-"ſcience.* Now whether thou haſt kept thy Promiſe thou then "madeſt before the Lord and ſo many hundred Witneſſes, judge "thy ſelf; for it had been better thou hadſt never vowed (or "thus have ſpoken) then not to perform; for the Lord hath no "pleaſure in Fools: But that it may appear that thou haſt not "kept this thy Vow (or Promiſe) is made manifeſt to every ſee-"ing Eye (and much more to thy own Conſcience, unleſs it is ſo "ſeared that it is paſt feeling) for if thou hadſt been thus care-"ful to avoid the Reproaches of thine own Conſcience, or to "have been tender of thy inward Peace, thou wouldſt not have "done (or ſuffered in thy Name to be done) ſo many Acts of "Cruelty as have been lately manifeſted againſt ſome tender "Conſciences, that durſt not put into thy Mouth, or give thee "that which (unlawfully in the Sight of God) is demanded as "thy Dues, whereby thou and others, as evil Servants to a bad "Maſter, are chiefly maintained in Pride and Looſneſs; for "which purpoſe many are impoveriſhed, and the Poor and "Needy are ready to periſh, whilſt a ſmall number (though too "too many) that ran when the Lord never ſent them, do by "their Cruelty and Oppreſſion devour the Labours of many ten-"der-hearted Ones, who are content in the Fear of the Lord to "work, and not to eat the Bread of Idleneſs, whoſe Example "thou oughteſt to imitate, that ſo thou mighteſt approve thy "ſelf in the Sight of God, as one that hath no need to be aſha-"med: But doſt not thou ſee that it is far otherwiſe? for while "thou and the reſt of thy Brotherhood are many times preach-"ing and making long Prayers, is it not for a Pretence to devour "Widdows Houſes, and to make a Prey of thoſe that for Con-"ſcience ſake refuſe to put into your Mouthes, are not you the "men that prepare War againſt them? Now as in God's ſight, "and to the ſwift Witneſs in thy own Breaſt, ſearch and faith-

"fully

"fully acknowledge who is your Pattern and Example, whether "you are the men that were really commissionated from God, "and have been the Followers of Christ, and so waited upon "him till you have received Power from on high, and whether "you have freely received, and so freely administer, seeking no "man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel, which soon waxeth old, "and shall come to an end; or whether you are not in the Foot- "steps of the false Prophets and Priests, which prophesied fals- "ly and for Rewards, and seek for their Gain from their Quar- "ter, and bear rule over them; and whether you are not in the "way of *Balaam*, who loved the Wages of Unrighteousness? "and are not you greedily running after his Error, who taught "the Enemies of the Lord to cast Stumbling-blocks in the Way "of God's People? Oh! how many Stumbling-blocks have you "laid by your Ungodly Lives and Evil Practices, which have "caused many a one that was lame and halt to be turned out of "the strait and narrow Way, that leads unto Life, and through "your Lyes and your Lightness have caused Thousands to "walk in your crooked Wayes and Pathes of Darkness, so that "they stumble, not knowing at what they stumble; for they "are like the Whore that sinned, and wipt her Mouth, and said, "*She had done no Evil*; so these being in the Whore's spirit, "who have gone from the Guide of their Youth, and whose "Maker was their Husband, they have left the Lord, and have "chosen other Lovers, and so run to those things that men make "Ordinances, and then they wipe their Mouthes, and think all "is well; then they have offered an Offering to the Lord, and "think they have done what the Lord requires; when all they do, "whilst in that Spirit, is an Abomination to the Lord: Oh! "these are they who are walking in the broad Way, that leads "to Destruction, and consider not the Lord, nor the Operation "of his Hands: But the Lord out of his tender Love hath pul- "led and is pulling Thousands out of the Jaw of the Devourer, "and is bringing them into the Just Man's Path, which is as a shi- "ning Light, shining more and more unto the perfect Day, "which Way leads to *Jerusalem*, which is the City of the Great "King; so that they have no need of the Light of the Sun, nor

"the

" the Moon (nor of any of your glorious Shews, whose Bright-
" nels only seems great to the Carnal mind, which is yet behold-
" ing things with a visible Eye) but the Glory of God shall
" shine in that Heart, whose Face is turned *Sion*-ward, and the
" Lamb shall be the Light of it; so that those that are turned
" to the Lord behold his Glory (which is invisible) and see that
" High Way exalted, in which the Wayfaring Man, though a
" Fool, shall not err, if he keeps in his Way, and not turn to
" the Right Hand of mens specious Pretences, and seeming
" Shews of Godliness, nor to the Left Hand of Looseness and
" Vanity, but keeps his Eye right on, and takes fast hold of his
" Guide and holy Commander, who leads in the Way of Righ-
" teousness, and there is nothing crooked or Perverse in it Friend,
" (in Love and Affection I call thee so, though I know not but
" for this thou mayst prove my Enemy) I do from my very heart
" desire thee, that thou wouldst search into the secret of thy
" own heart, and freely give up to the Judgment of that true
" and faithful Witness that God hath placed in thy heart, and let
" that determine whether thy present state and condition (and
" whether that Way and Worship that) thou art in, and art
" leading others into, whether all be right in the sight of God;
" for *if thy own Conscience condemneth thee, God is greater.*
" Therefore my desire is, even from my very Soul, that thou
" would'st turn thy mind within (*For what is to be known of God*
" *is manifest within*) and be impartial as to the Judgment of that
" true and faithful Witness which came from God to testifie a-
" gainst the very appearance of Evil, which no Gold or Silver can
" bribe, and which will by no means acquit the Guilty, whe-
" ther that will justifie that Way of Worship that thou art
" in, and whether it gives in its Testimony, That that is that
" Spiritual Worship which Christ himself set up, saying,
" *Neither at this Mountain nor yet at* Jerusalem *shall men wor-*
" *ship the Father, but he that worshippeth the Father Must*
" *worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* Mark, Here is that
" [*Must*] which is for the King of Heaven: Now, where wilt
" thou or the Wise Men of this Generation prefer or set up a
" Worship, or a Place for the Lord to be worshipped in, seeing
" God's Worship is a spiritual Worship? Wherefore do you



" mix

" mix your Carnal Ordinances and Mens Traditions together, " and set these up for the Worship of God? Now, is not this " *England's* state amongst those that are worshipping they know " not what? but that which men set up for a Worship, that " Priests for filthy Lucre will preach up (and teach poor people " that love their Lusts, and their Lives more then God, or Obe- " dience to his holy Spirit, which is placed in their Inward parts) " and so thousands are beguiled and led away with the Error of " the Wicked; and whilst they live, they live in sin (which first " separated man from God; and whilst it remains, the separation " still remains) and so like Priest like People, they live in sin, and " so dye in sin, and so *where Christ is they cannot come*; for he is en- " tred into the holy City, where no unclean thing shall enter, " nor whatsoever loveth or maketh a Lye.

" Friend, This I must tell thee, which hath been oft upon me, " That thou, with the rest and the best of all Professions, who " are in the Traditions and vain Conceivings of fleshly Wisdom, " and are seeking of Honour one from another, and not seeking " that Honour that comes from God only, you are all in the wrong " spirit, that leads from the true Principle of Light and Truth, " which is the very Way that leads to God; and so all your Wor- " ships, that you are setting up in that fleshly Wisdom, is but like " *Jeroboam's* Calves, which kept the Children of *Israel* from " seeking after the God of their Fathers; and so thou and all o- " thers, that are drawing out the Mind to hearken and learn of " such as thou art, they are in the state of those silly Women, " that are alwayes learning, but never able to come to the know- " ledge of the Truth. Now, Christ said, *If you know the Truth,* " *the Truth shall make you free; and if the Truth make you free, you* " *shall be free indeed.* Now, if a man be free indeed, then there " can be no part in Bondage; and he that is thus made free, it " is not in Word and in Shew only, but in Deed and in Truth: " and this Truth, which makes free (which is Christ) God pro- " mised to put in the Heart and in the inward Parts, so that none " should need to say to his Neighbour or to his Brother, *Know* " *the Lord*, for they shall all know him from the least to the great- " est: Now here is that Teacher that shall never be removed in- " to a Corner, though the Rage of the Wicked and Floods of the

" Un-

"Ungodly may ſwell and make a noiſe, as if they would ſwal-
"low up and deſtroy, and ſtop the Mouthes of thoſe whoſe
"Mouthes the Lord hath opened, yet that Teacher is made
"known in the Hearts of Thouſands that all the Violence of the
"Wicked can never hurt nor deſtroy, but ſtill their Eyes ſhall
"behold their Teacher, and ſhall hear the Voice, ſaying, *This*
"*is the Way, walk in it, and you ſhall find Reſt to your Never-dying*
"*Souls*; which Voice my Soul doth heartily beſeech the Almigh-
"ty God of Power that thy Soul may hear, though with *Saul* it
"ſhould ſtrike thee to the Ground, yet that thou mayſt turn to
"him that ſmites thee, and with a ſenſible feeling of his Sword
"in thy inward parts, which pricks for ſin, that holy Cry may be
"utter'd from thee, ſaying, *Lord, what wouldſt thou have me to*
"*do?* that thou mightſt be really willing to do what the Lord
"would have thee to do, and not what fleſhly Wiſdom would
"have thee to do; for that Voice will cry, *Oh! keep thy Favour*
"*with the High Prieſts, and thy Titles of Honour, and thy fleshly*
"*Wiſdom, and thou mayſt riſe higher yet, and be a Biſhop and an*
"*Arch-Biſhop, and then thou mayſt have Authority over the Con-*
"*ſciences of Men and Women; and they that will not ſubject them-*
"*ſelves to a Conformity to thy Way and Preſcription, thou mayſt de-*
"*viſe ſome wayes to impoveriſh their Eſtates, and impriſon and per-*
"*ſecute them even to Death, and ſo mayſt Lord it over the Flock of*
"*Chriſt.* Oh hearken not to this Voice of Fleſh and Blood; for
"that ſhall never inherit the Kingdom of God; conſult not with
"that; for that leads in the Way of Deſtruction: but joyn to
"the heavenly Voice, which tells thee, *It is hard to kick againſt*
"*the Pricks.* Now my Soul deſires, that thou mayſt not go to
"do ſuch a hard thing, as to kick againſt the Lord when he calls
"thee out of thy Pride, and Pomp, and Glory of the World;
"and from thy Titles of Honour and Places of Preferment,
"which in Words thou haſt often preached againſt, when by thy
"Life it hath appeared that thy Soul luſted after it. Oh! that
"the God of Eternal Majeſty would break in upon thy Soul by
"his Arm of Strength, and cauſe the Scales to fall from thy Eyes,
"that ſo thou mightſt ſee the inviſible Glory, unto which all
"things that thou here poſſeſſeſt is as Dung and Droſs, and that

"thou mightst, like wise *Moses* (whom I know in words thou "wilt commend) chuse rather to suffer Affliction with the Peo- "ple of God rather then to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, which "endure but for a moment: These things I know thou canst suf- "ficiently speak of in words, but the weight and feeling sense of "them few do enjoy; for their Friendship they have in the world, "and the fading, fleshly, sensual Life that men are wallowing in, "taketh away the true sense of the weight and burden of sin, "and doth obscure those divine Pleasures and Rivers of Joy that "are at God's Right Hand for evermore.

"So to satisfie thee, that this hath partly lain as a burden up- "on my Spirit for some years, at which time, when I sate under "thy Preaching, then was the Witness of God in my own heart, "which did plead with me in secret, and could not be silent, but "did testifie against both Root and Branch of Iniquity, which "lodged in my Heart, and could not speak Peace to me whilst "I was in Sin; but though I was in the performances of those "things which men call Ordinances (and in Truth I can speak it, "I did see my Life far exceed Hundreds that were Hearers of "thee as well as my self (both in Life and Conversation) yet "there was that Righteous Seed of the Kingdom in me that then "I knew not, that was then burdened and oppresst under the "weight of Iniquity) and though I ran hither and thither, yet "I found no place where the Worker of Iniquity could hide "himself, but still the Truth of that Scripture I witnessed, which "saith, *There is no Peace to the Wicked*: Then the Lord followed "me with his Judgments outwardly, by taking away those pre- "cious Comforts in which my heart too much delighted, in that "great Judgment of the Plague, which came as a Scourge for "our Transgression, when thou fledst from the Judgment, and "from those poor helpless Creatures that thou seemingly didst "take charge over, leaving them in the time of great Distress, "making use of a Scripture for thy Farewel, which will prove "thy utter Condemnation, unless thou comest to witness the Life "and Power of it in thy own Heart, saying, *Cursed is the Man "that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm, whose Heart "departeth from the Lord.* Now I appeal to the Righteous Wit-

"ness,

"ness in thy own Heart, whether thou then wast not the Man
"(and I fear thou still art) that lieth under the Power of that
"Curse; for didst not thou make Flesh thy Arm when thou
"fledst from that place where thou with the rest of the In-
"habitants had caused the Lord to punish the Inhabitants
"with the greatest Plague that hath been known for ma-
"ny Generations? Oh man! canst thou so plainly read thy
"Condemnation and not tremble? Then after this great out-
"ward Judgment the Lord was pleased by his good Spirit to
"move in my heart, and to trouble me for my Transgressions,
"which Wound I thought to have healed by following those
"Traditions or carnal Ordinances, which can never heal or make
"clean as pertaining to the Conscience, then the Lord was plea-
"sed to make thy Teaching manifest unto me to be unprofitable;
"and though in Words thou professedst Christ, yet in Works
"thou denyedst him: and so I was moved of God under a true
"sense of thy Conversation not becoming a Minister of
"Christ, and to that end I did write some Lines, which I could
"wish with my whole heart thou hadst them; but I was Coward-
"ly, (and ashamed to deliver them (Was not this the Fear of
"Man that bringeth a Snare?) but I left them at thy Gate, with
"Directions for thy self, but I concealed my Name, and knew
"not whether ever thou hadst them, so that after all this the
"Lord was pleased with the Spirit of Judgment and of Burning
"to plead with me, wherein his Love was manifested, that he
"was willing to gather me home into his Sheep-fold, and so he
"made Sin to become exceeding sinful, and so brought up his
"swift Witness in my Heart, which condemned me for every
"idle word, and for those loose Practices that I had formerly li-
"ved in, and so separated me from the Teachings of Men, and
"he became my Teacher which teacheth to do to all men as I
"would be done unto. Now I demand of thee in God's Fear,
"whether thou art obedient to this Teacher? Oh! that my Soul
"could see thee act and walk as one that is taught of the Lord;
"then thou wouldst cease to make a Prey of any one for filthy
"Lucre; then that would teach thee to love Enemies, and not
"to hate Friends; that would teach thee to forgive those (if any

"such

"such there be) that have treſpaſſed againſt thee, even as thou "wouldſt deſire the Lord to forgive thee that haſt ſo often treſ- "paſſed againſt him: Oh! how often haſt thou taken theſe "words in thy Mouth, and mocked the Lord? I deſire thee in "God's Fear and Dread to take heed of ever uſing thoſe words "again, till thou doſt really witneſs the Life and Power of them "in thy own heart, leſt the Lord ſhould deal with thee according "to thy Deſire, and ſo make thee to be as *Nadab* and *Abihu*, an "Aſtoniſhment to all People; for, what are thy Prayers, but "as their Strange (or Falſe) Fire before the Lord? Is it not "ſtrange that thou ſhouldſt pray to God to forgive thee thy "Treſpaſſes as thou forgiveſt others, when thou cauſeſt the Bo- "dy of others to be thrown into Priſon for that which is truly "no Treſpaſs againſt thee? If thou deſireſt the ſame dealing, "may not God juſtly caſt thy Soul into the Priſon of Hell? Oh! "are not theſe ſad Prayers and ſad Men that will pray they know "not what, nor never witneſſed the good Spirit to teach them to "pray as they ought? So to the good Spirit I commit thee, or "to the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, which hath ap- "peared to all men, that the ſame Grace may teach thee to deny "Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, and to live godlily, Righte- "ouſly and ſoberly in this preſent Evil World; this is the hearty "Deſire of my Soul for thee, even as for my ſelf, and this is "from the Lord in Love to thy immortal Soul, who before con- "cealed my Name, but now am made manifeſt to be thy Friend "and Servant in the Lord, for whoſe ſake I diſdain not to be ac- "counted a Fool.

*Thine in the Lord*

JOHN SELLWOOD.

A Copy of this Letter I delivered into the hands of *William Clark* (called, *Doctor of Stepney*) in the 5th moneth (called, *July*) in the year 1670. So after he had received it of me, I deſired him, *That he would read it*; and told him, *That I was an Inhabitant in the Pariſh*, and *that it had been a Burden to me for ſome*

*ſome time*: He asked me, *If my Name was to it?* I told him, *Yea*: He asked me, *Where I did dwell?* I told him, *At Mile-end, my Name was* John Sellwood: He anſwered, *Very well*; and ſo we parted.

Neighbours and Acquaintance of all ſorts, I do deſire that you may not make a wrong uſe of theſe Lines; for, whatever you may judge of them in a carnal Mind, I do aſſure you, they were neither written nor delivered as to the ſatisfying of the Fleſh, but in a ſerious weighty Senſe of the Love of God to my Soul, in drawing my mind off from theſe Men-pleaſing Teachers, and ſetting it upon himſelf, who promiſed to teach his people himſelf, and to gather them from off the barren Mountains, where they had been ſcattered in the Cloudy and Dark Day, and to bring them home to his Fold of Reſt, where none of the Idol-Shepherds ſhould any longer make a Prey of them, or cauſe them to wander any more: Indeed this day is this fulfilled in our Age and Generation, and a little Remnant hath the Lord gathered nigh unto himſelf, whoſe Hearts are waiting to receive the ſpiritual Law from his own Mouth, which Law is perfect, converting the Soul, and his Commandment is pure, and gives Underſtanding to the Simple; by this pure holy Law many have been condemned, and the Righteous Judgments of the Lord have been inwardly executed upon the very Seed and Nature that hath led man into Tranſgreſſion; and by theſe Righteous Judgments have many been forewarned (that they durſt not run into the ſame Exceſs of Riot, nor to be a Companion of Fools, which makes a Mock of Sin) but by theſe Judgments of the Lord in the Earthly Heart many have learned Righteouſneſs; and in keeping theſe inward holy Commandments there hath been a great Reward, even thoſe ſpiritual Conſolations that have truly refreſhed the Heart, and greatly ſatisfied the Minds of many, though for their faithfulneſs (to this inward Law, which God hath placed in the Heart) many have met with cruel Mockings, and Afflictions of ſeveral kinds, from unreaſonable men; yet in the midſt of all their outward Sorrows and Sufferings, their inward Joy hath greatly abounded, rejoycing in the Lord with ſingleneſs

singleness of Heart, whose Judgments and Mercies have drawn them near to himself, and pluckt many as Brands out of the Burning, wherein they were wallowing in Sin and Fleshly Vanities as well as others. Oh! that the Lord would be pleased, if it might stand with his Glory, to give every one of you a sight of those things that are displeasing in his sight; for, alas! it is but a few dayes that the longest have here to live, and then after Death comes eternal Judgment, unto which Sentence there shall be an Everlasting Existence to all perpetuity. Therefore take heed to your selves, that when Death seizes on your Body, that Death eternal may not be your Portion in the other World: for *when a Wicked Man dyeth, his Expectation perisheth*; Oh! lay to heart this one place of Scripture, and consider the Soul-astonishing state that that Man or Woman will be in when his Soul is departed from his Body, if they be in the State of a Wicked Man or Wicked Woman, which dyes in their sin; for it was the Saying of Christ himself (who is the Light of the World) *If you believe not that I am he, you shall dye in your Sins, and where I go you cannot come.* Now consider these things, you that can rejoyce in Iniquity, and commit Sin with Greedinese; and it may be your Confidence is as strong, that you shall be saved by Christ's Death and Merit, when you were never subject to his righteous Law, nor led and guided by his holy Spirit, and all this while consider not, that *when a Wicked Man dies his Expectation perisheth.*

Neighbours, I desire in Love you would weigh the Matter, & seriously ponder the weighty Concern of your Immortal Souls, before it is too late; look about you, and behold the Wicked Man in the height of his outward Glory and Excellency, and see how at present he may flourish like a Green Bay Tree; he may be the Man that thou seest to fare deliciously every day; he may have the Pleasures of this World to attend him from his Youth to his old Age; he may be free from the manifold Attendencies of outward Sorrow and Affliction, that others may lie under; he may be in outward Esteem and Authority, whom he will he exalts to outward Honour, and whom he pleaseth he abaseth; but follow him a little further, and see how his Glory passeth

ſeth away like a Tale that is told, and he himſelf ſummoned to give account to God, the Righteous Judge of all the Earth, of all his Deeds done in the Body, whether Good or Evil: Look here, and ſee poor lofty Man, who through the Pride of his Heart lived as if there was no God, the Dread of the Lord was not in all his Thoughts, and here behold him on his Bed of Languiſhing, full of Toſſings and Tumblings, and his poor decayed Body all loaden with pain, wiſhing in the Morning, would it was Evening; and in the Evening, would it was Morning; and after a long ſtrugling his Soul taking its flight, and the poor caſleſs Sinner called to appear before the Judge of Quick and Dead, and he expecting after the Death of his Body to go to Reſt, and his Sorrows to have an End, but conſidereth not, *when a wicked man dyeth his Expectation periſheth*; then after this ſore Conflict, when he appears in the other World, expecting Reſt from all his Labours, then to awake, and liſt up his Eyes in eternal Flames of Torment: Oh! what heart can think or tongue expreſs the Soul-amazement that ſuch a one that dyes a wicked man or wicked woman will fall under! *For the Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God.*

Neighbours and Acquaintance, I am willing according to the Ability given me of God, to deliver theſe Lines amongſt you, by which you may ſee how it was with me in times paſt, when I was a diligent Hearer of thoſe that ran and the Lord never ſent; but the God of tender Compaſſion having regard to the Sincerity of my heart, did in his own due time ſeparate me from the dark traditional Worſhips of the World; and though I was in the time of my Ignorance exceeding Zealous for the Traditions of my Fathers, yet when it pleaſed God by the working of his holy Spirit in my heart, to give me a true ſight of the Hypocriſie and Deceit that I did plainly ſee and diſcern amongſt many of them that were then Teachers of others, but did not live and walk as did become the Goſpel of Chriſt, I was conſtrained to leave them, and all their Deceitful Doctrines, whereby my Soul was for a long time beguiled; and when I did ſenſibly feel the weight and burden of Sin, which lay as a Load upon my Soul, I did in the true Deſires of my Heart earneſtly beg of the Lord,

*To give me Strength and Power over all Sin, whereby I dishonoured the Lord, and wounded my own Soul*; the Lord was pleased in his own season to turn my mind inward, and search in my own heart, and there to see and feel the first motions and beginnings of sin to arise there, and being for many years beguiled by the smooth words and cunning Devices of men (or rather more principally of the Devil, whose Doctrine they teach) who sayes, *It is impossible to be free from Sin whilst on this side the Grave*: Oh! how did this add to my Sorrow and inward Burden! And when I had in my heart seen an end of all their Performances to be nothing but sin, and that for which God might justly damn the most Righteous of them for the Sins of their best Performances (being done and performed in their own will, and in their own strength) oh how was I begirded with Sorrow! and as to my outward Ability, though God had sufficiently added an increase to my Labours, yet all yielded me no inward Satisfaction, nor the enjoyment of the whole World would not have given Peace to my inward troubled Spirit. Oh! at that time how oft have I separated my self from all outward Familiars, and Affairs, and Pleasures of all sorts, and in the deep pondring of mind, as my Heart truly ran after the Lord, it pleased the Lord to appear in the needful time, and gave me plainly to see the Enemy in his most secret Workings; and though he did appear various Ways, and after divers Manners, yet I did then see (and that by the Spirit of God in my own Heart) that he had not power to compel me to do the least Evil; and at this discovery of the Kindness of the Lord, my Heart was greatly comforted: but oh the sundry and suddain Besetments that I soon after met withal! how was my Life often in Jeopardy! how did the Enemy of my Soul cast out his Floods to destroy those small beginnings of Life, which the Lord had kindled in my Heart, and like a vigilent Adversary did hunt for the precious Life! but the mighty Power of God was made bare for my Preservation against all his fiery Darts; but by Reason of the many Temptations that did appear in my Heart, I was oftentimes dismay'd, and by reason of which renewed Troubles would enter my mind, but then did the Lord in his wonted Goodness appear, and plainly shewed me it was no sin to be tempted, but the sin was in yielding to the Temptation;

tation; but as in the Discoveries of the Love and Power of God I resisted the Temptation, I was preserved from falling under it; and then that holy Scripture I witnessed to be true, where the Servant of God said, *Count it all Joy when you fall into divers Temptations*: and thus the Love of God did still appear in the needful time; and as Temptations did abound, the Riches of the Love of God in Christ Jesus did much more abound, and my understanding in things pertaining to Salvation was more enlarged: and at that time I did clearly see, *That all the Professions that are this day in the World, that are without Life and Power from God, to be all but Will-Worship, and have no acceptance with God; and though many were in high Notions of God and Christ, it was but as an empty sound without any substance*: for in the serious communing with my own heart, the Lord opened to my understanding some of the weighty things that concerned my Salvation, which, though I had many times before read the same Scriptures, yet I felt not the Power and Efficacy thereof till by the Light of Christ Jesus they were open'd in my heart, and that immediately by the Finger of God: which place of Scripture is, where the Angel appeared to *Joseph*, and told him, *That the Child's Name should be called Jesus, for he should save his People from their Sins*; which words were set home with Authority from Heaven, and gave me to see that it was not a Profession of Christ in the most eminent & highest Form that would avail, unless they that did thus profess him did come to witness his living Power to save them from their Sins; for, *For this purpose was the Son of God made manifest, to destroy Sin, and him that hath the power of Sin, which is the Devil*: These two Scriptures being considered according to the true intent and spiritual meaning thereof, might be a sufficient Evidence to all those that plead for Sin term of Life, *that they have neither Part nor Lot in this Heavenly Inheritance*; wherefore my desire for you all is, That you may all come to be living Witnesses of the powerful Effects of the Coming of Christ, which is, *to save his People from their Sins, and to redeem them from all Iniquity*: So that it is easily seen and discerned who are the true Believers, whose Faith is the Faith of God's Elect, whom it is impossible to deceive: And who are those that are in the Unbelief, whose Faith is quite contrary? for the one believes, That

Christ will fully perform the Work that the Father gave him to do, that is, *to make an end of Sin, and to finish Transgression, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness unto all those that believe in him and obey him*; the other believes *it is impossible, and no such state attainable in this World*: This Faith is contrary to the Faith of God's Elect; and all that are in this Faith, to them it is impossible to please God; and so consequently, all their Performances, even those which they call their Holy Duties, are all sin, being separated from that pure Faith that purifies the heart to God, and so it is to each man according to his Faith; *For, to him that believes all things are possible* (this is plain Scripture) Now if I or any Man or Woman in the World have this true Faith in Christ, who is made unto the true Believers both the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, why should those great Pretenders to Religion and Faith in Christ Jesus deny, that it is possible to overcome Sin, when Believers have Christ, which is the Power of God and Wisdom of God to help them? So then, if I have the Power of God, I hope I have more with me then can be against me; and if I have the Wisdom of God, I doubt not but I shall have that good Understanding that will preserve me from all Evil; so that to me it suffices, that to him that believes it is possible to overcome sin; but to him that believes not, to him it is impossible: But now, that none might be mistaken in this my Faith and Judgment, in this weighty matter of Salvation, of being saved from all Sin; I do not say, as soon as a man or woman is come to have Faith in Christ Jesus, and his Understanding is really opened, and that he plainly sees there is help laid upon one that is mighty to save, and that to the uttermost all that come to God by him, that he that thus believes is presently freed from all Sin; no, no; but he that hath attained to this precious Faith, he is then entred a real Souldier under Christ, the Captain of his Salvation; and being in this true Faith that works by Love, he is chearfully carryed on in this spiritual Warfare, warring against the spiritual Adversary of the Soul, and Evil Inclinations of the flesh; and continuing in that Faith that works by Love, he is contented to endure Hardships, like a good Souldier, that although the Enemy may assault, and sometimes

pursue,

purſue, yet he reſolves never to quit the Field, nor forſake his Captain, but with the Reſolution of holding out unto the end, he watches, he ſtruggles, he wars, he Fights, keeping on his ſpiritual Armour, whereby he is able to reſiſt the Enemy, and ſo by degrees, as his Faith grows ſtronger and ſtronger, his Enemies grow weaker and weaker, and by his continuing faithful, in obedience to his holy Commander, who will be ſure to lead in the Way of Righteouſnels, in due time he obtains the Victory; and being faithful unto the Death, he receives the Crown of Life, which God the Righteous Judge (of both Quick and Dead) will give unto all thoſe that love his ſpiritual Appearance.

Well, Neighbours, I was willing, according to my meaſure, and as it hath pleaſed the Lord to open to my Underſtanding (in thoſe things pertaining to the Salvation of my Soul) thus to write, being well aſſured, that no Form of Profeſſion, though it be the Truth it ſelf, that will be available to the Salvation of the Soul, unleſs it be accompanied with that living Power of God, which alone is able to overcome the Wicked One: Therefore whatever any of your Thoughts may be as touching your Faith in Chriſt, and being made Partakers of theſe heavenly Rewards that God beſtows on them that love and fear him, to you it will be no Advantage, unleſs you come to witneſs in your own Boſoms that living Faith, whereby you may overcome the World, and all the Snares and Temptations therein; for this was that that the Followers of Jeſus could glory in, even their Faith, whereby they got the Victory over the World, that although they met with various Tryals from unreaſonable men as without, and the furious Aſſaults of the Enemy within, yet they abiding in this living Faith, found the Lord ſtill to be near at hand, and a preſent Help in the time of need, through which many could rejoyce in great Tribulations, and others ſuffered joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, and others refuſed to accept of Deliverance, and many ſuffered cruel Mockings, ſome hewn in pieces and ſawn aſunder, and many being perſecuted and tormented, going about in Sheep-skins and Goats-skins, of whom the world was not worthy: Oh! behold and ſee the deſpiſed Remnant of

Jeſus

Jesus, who loved not their Lives unto Death, but chose rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, then to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a season; for they had an eye to the Recompence of Reward.

O! you Armies of the Lord's Host, that are this day come out of *Egypt*'s Bondage, and have this day refused *Egypt*'s Glory, who with your Souls are travelling *Sion*-ward, where the Lord delights to dwell forever; in the strength of *Israel*'s God go on and prosper: and as a poor Fellow-traveller, that longeth and desireth forever to dwell with the Lord that made me, and fashioned me in the Womb, and hath preserved me a sensible Monument of his living Mercies to this very day, you that thus travel on in the strength of the Lord, with you I am content to become your Companion in Tribulation; and though many may be yet but as in the Wilderness, where the Lord is minded to prove us, yet having our Confidence in the God of our Salvation, he will bring us through this long howling Wilderness, and through the Overflowings of *Jordan*; and as those whose Hearts are right with the Lord, we shall in God's appointed Season enter into the Holy Land, where we shall eat of the Milk and Honey, and our Souls shall be as a well-watered Garden, that bringeth forth fruit abundantly to him that dresseth and watereth it; and the Praise and the Glory shall be given to the Lord, who is worthy for ever and for evermore, *Amen* and *Amen*.

THE END.